

are quite familiar to everybody in this country, and, taken together with those of the every-day practice of surgery, they prove three things: (1) that the germs of putrefaction exist, with restrained potentiality, in all living tissue; (2) that the restraining influence is what we call, for want of a better name, vital force; (3) that when the restraining influence has its balance upset by what we call disease, lowered vitality, accident, etc., the germs are let loose to work their evil wills. This is the fundamental pathology which I was taught as a youth, and my mature experience confirms it every day in every particular.

One matter aside. Professor White complains of my attack on the deadly and dangerous character of the double cyanide dressing. I have had no experience of it, and my objection certainly was *a priori*. But with the awful experience we have had of the poisonous effects of carbolic, have we not reasonable grounds for fearing in a "double cyanide" something far worse? The part of the whole business of the antiseptic processes, where ridicule becomes the most potent, indeed the only argument, is that when we have seen every few months an infallible nostrum introduced, adopted by those of the "abiding faith," sworn to as the perfection of the system, and then, *incredibile dictu*, dropped into oblivion without a word of explanation or apology. Ordinary, plain-sailing, every-day folk, like myself, were charmed with the idea of the spray. It seemed so complete, so logical, that the confession on the part of Sir Joseph that he was ashamed of it put the final stone on the cairn of antisepticism.

I am, etc.,

Birmingham.

LAWSON TAIT.

SIR,—Mr. Tait reiterates but does not add to his previous argument. His interesting observation of the innocuous effect of the "cut of the morning shave" is merely confirmatory from the masculine standpoint of the great truths already made clear to him by the experience of the opposite sex as embodied in the "facts of the henwife and the housewife." On this broad basis of generalization he erects a "fundamental pathology" which he condenses into three propositions embracing views as to "restrained potentiality," "vital force," and the "evil wills" of the germs of putrefaction—a

sort of pathological metaphysics at least as irrational as the theological variety to which he objects.

The fact that he practically ignores the evidence I ventured to bring forward and the authorities I referred to renders further argument useless.

Something has been gained by his confession that he described the double cyanide dressing as "deadly and dangerous" on *a priori* grounds solely, and without having had the very least experience with it.

By the side light which this ingenuous admission throws on Mr. Tait's mental processes I would be led, were I truly a metaphysical theologian, to conclude this final contribution to my side of the discussion by preaching him a short sermon, taking as my text the saying of Confucius: "To know that we know what we know and that we do not know what we do not know is the sum of all human knowledge."

I am, etc.,

Philadelphia.

J. WILLIAM WHITE.

ON THE DIFFICULTY EXPERIENCED IN THE DIAGNOSIS OF WHOOPING-COUGH FROM THE PRESENCE OF A TUBE IN THE TRACHEA.—A boy, six years old, was admitted to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Glasgow, on November 6th, 1888. He was in such distress from urgent dyspnoea, due obviously to laryngeal obstruction, that in about an hour after his admission tracheotomy was performed by Dr. Hector C. Cameron. The breathing was at once relieved. The case was at first suspected to be of diphtheritic nature, although no membrane was seen either before, or during, or after the operation. The boy was reported to have had a cough for a fortnight before his admission, and he was said to have vomited with his attacks of coughing. After the operation the boy seemed to do well enough, but he continued to have a very troublesome cough, which was supposed to be connected, in part at least, with the irritation of the tube, etc. On the eighteenth day the tube was removed, and he did well enough without it. The cough still continued. After the removal of the tube the peculiar character of the cough began to excite my suspicions, and in three days the resemblance to whooping-cough became so great that his removal to the